

Jeremy Francis Gilmer (February 23, 1818 – December 1, 1883) was an [American](#) soldier, mapmaker, and [civil engineer](#) most noted for his service as the Chief Engineer of the [Confederate States Army](#) during the [American Civil War](#). As a [major general](#), he oversaw the planning of the elaborate defenses of the city of [Atlanta, Georgia](#).

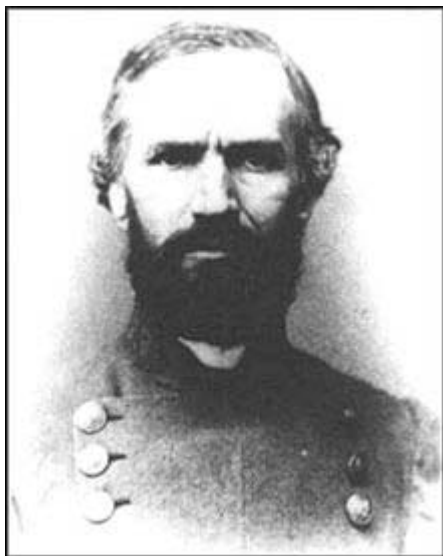
Early life

Gilmer was born in [Guilford County, North Carolina](#). He entered the army corps of engineers as a [second lieutenant](#) upon his graduation from the [United States Military Academy](#) in 1839. He ranked fourth in a graduating class that included future fellow Civil War generals [Halleck](#), [Canby](#), [Hunt](#), and [Ord](#). He was an assistant professor of engineering at West Point until June 1840, when he was reassigned to [New York City](#) where he was assistant engineer in the construction of [Fort Schuyler](#) in [New York Harbor](#).

Gilmer served in the [Mexican War](#) as Chief Engineer of the Army of the West in the [New Mexico Territory](#) and helped design and construct [Fort Marcy](#) in [Sante Fe](#). He also surveyed battlefields near [Mexico City](#). Until 1861, he was active in making surveys, constructing fortifications in various locations including [San Francisco, California](#), and executing various river and harbor improvements

Civil War

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, he resigned his commission in June 1861, left California, and entered the Confederate service. He was appointed as a [major](#) of engineers. He soon became chief engineer on the staff of General [A. S. Johnston](#) as a [lieutenant colonel](#). Gilmer was severely wounded in his right arm at the [Battle of Shiloh](#), where Johnston was killed. After his recovery in Georgia, Gilmer was promoted to chief engineer of the Department of Northern Virginia in early August 1862. He was stationed at [Richmond](#) with the rank of [brigadier general](#).



☐ Gilmer, Chief of the Confederate Engineering Bureau

In 1863, he was promoted to major general and appointed Chief of the Engineer Bureau for the Confederacy. He spent time overseeing the defenses of [Charleston, South Carolina](#), although he was still plagued by recurring health problems from his Shiloh wound. Concerned that the vital rail and manufacturing center of Atlanta would be targeted by [Union](#) forces, he commissioned Atlanta businessman and entrepreneur [Lemuel P. Grant](#) to develop a plan to ring the city with forts and earthworks along all the key approaches. These elaborate defenses would prove difficult to seize in frontal assaults, forcing the Union army to lay [siege to Atlanta](#) in the summer of 1864.

Gilmer helped improve the defenses of [Mobile, Alabama](#), in June and July. He returned to Richmond late in 1864 and spent the rest of the war there in the Engineer Bureau.

About the Gilmer Civil War Maps

The Gilmer maps are an extensive group of Civil War maps, including both manuscript maps and printed maps with manuscript annotations and engineers' drawings of military construction, housed in the [Manuscripts Department](#) of The Wilson Library. This site currently includes 161 maps representative of the entire southern region, with particularly large groupings of North Carolina and Virginia maps. Most of the maps are dated 1861-1865. The Gilmer maps available on this site are part of a larger collection of materials called the Jeremy Gilmer Papers, which contains army papers, 1851-1859, about the construction of fortifications on the Georgia and Florida coast; Gilmer's diary, 1841-1842, at Fort Schuyler, N.Y.; a Confederate order book, 1863-1864, from the Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina military district; letters from Gilmer to his wife and family; a few additional maps; and other items. [An inventory](#) of this collection is available at the Manuscripts Department's website.

Post-War career

After the war, from 1867–1883 Gilmer was president and engineer of the Savannah Gas Company. He was also a director of the [Georgia Central Railroad](#).

Death

Jeremy F. Gilmer died from heart disease in [Savannah, Georgia](#), and is buried in the city's [Laurel Grove Cemetery](#).